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The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ: A Devotional History of our Lord's Passion. By JAMES STALKER, D.D. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1894. Pp. xv.+321.

With the sketch of the *Life of Jesus Christ* which Dr. Stalker published some years ago the religious world has become quite generally familiar. From the first it was regarded as a remarkable piece of work, in that it gave in so very brief and compressed a form so clear, bright, graphic and true a view of Jesus' earthly career. In the preparation of that small volume the author felt the inadequacy of the space which could be allotted to the closing passages of Christ's public ministry, the Passion so-called. A cherished desire to treat those passages with greater fullness is realized in this new volume. The limits of our Lord's Passion are taken as beginning with his arrest at the Garden of Gethsemane and ending with his burial. The twenty-three chapters treat in detail all of the incidents recorded in the four Gospels as falling between these two events, in the order in which they are supposed to have occurred.

Dr. Stalker in the sub-title calls his book a "Devotional History," and he explains in the Preface what he means by this description: "The subject is one which has to be studied with the heart as well as with the head." Well, is there any study of the Bible (or, for that matter, of anything else) which requires simply the head, from which the heart, *i. e.* the religious sense and feeling, may be excused as irrelevant? Perhaps Dr. Stalker means to designate his work as a practical-religious study as contrasted with an historico-critical study of Jesus' trial and death. It is the former, it is not the latter. No questions pertaining to the genuineness or authenticity of the material at any point are raised, and views contrary to those of the writer are seldom discussed. He simply gives us his understanding of each of the various incidents which make up the history. And his understanding of the history is such as commends itself almost without exception to the reader.

His treatment of the arrest is excellent. The dignity and self-possession of Jesus, and the temporary consternation of the mob which it caused; the constituency of the mob, and the action of Judas, are well portrayed. The cowardice attributed to the apostles is perhaps overdone. The ecclesiastical trial has three steps, a hearing before Annas, then before an informal meeting of the Sanhedrim, then before a formal meeting of the Sanhedrim after day-break. The condemnation was illegally and unjustly passed. Pilate's part in the trial and his portion of the responsibility for the crucifixion are well described and weighed. Judas' character and guilt are portrayed at length, and with justice. The place of the crucifixion is not even referred to, the time is said to be about noon. The seven words from the cross each receive a chapter of exposition. The fourth ("My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"), difficult as it is, is treated with deep spiritual insight and a firm grasp of the historical and theological problems involved.

The book is full of preaching—the drawing out of practical applications and of likenesses and contrasts to present-day life. The book reads in many places as though composed of sermons actually delivered. This will render it acceptable to a certain large class of readers, and on the other hand unattractive to those who desire an historical rather than a practical study. *Explicit* preaching is very abundant, to many it is so as to become tiresome; *implicit* preaching is becoming increasingly the only form with which a large and important element of humanity can be reached. Thinking men are often quite as able to preach to themselves as the professional preacher, and perhaps also quite as faithful in doing so. Capable men are coming to ask for the facts only, feeling themselves best fitted to draw lessons therefrom for themselves.

Dr. Stalker doubtless intended this book, as he has his previous ones, for the general lay reader, unembarrassed by any historico-critical problems. The Sunday School world, is perhaps, the best characterization of this public. Waiving the large homiletical element, enormously larger than in his previous historical writings, the work compares favorably with his other earlier ones.

C. W. V.